

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 19, 2005*

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to participate in the following vote. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 182, on May 18, 2005, on Agreeing to the Resolution H. Res. 283, Providing for the consideration of H.R. 1817, Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, I would have voted "yes."

## BULGARIA—AN ALLY AND FRIEND

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 19, 2005*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Republic of Bulgaria on its continued—and unwavering—support of the United States both in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am particularly encouraged by Bulgaria's commitment in Iraq. In defiance of great pressure to withdraw its troops, Bulgaria has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in bringing freedom and democracy to the Iraqi people.

One need only look to Bulgaria's past to recognize the significance of its actions now. A former Soviet bloc country, Bulgaria was a cold war adversary of the United States. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, however, Bulgaria has revitalized its economy, entered the world market, and contributed to peacekeeping operations around the globe. Indeed, bold steps supported by a profound vision for the future, have resulted in great progress. Today, Bulgaria is one of the newest members of NATO, and it is finalizing its accession to the European Union.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of Bulgaria's evolution from cold war adversary to strategic ally, is its willingness to actively promote democracy beyond its borders—particularly in Iraq. As a member of the United Nations Security Council during the Iraq debate, Bulgaria voted with the United States concerning the use of military force in Iraq. Bulgaria also routinely grants to the United States the use of its airspace, and has offered ground, air, and naval basing rights.

Most importantly, however, Bulgaria has contributed to bringing peace and democracy to Iraq not only through its words, but through its sacrifices.

Bulgaria has 500 troops in Iraq and has suffered 8 deaths there. Yet it remains resolute. On the day that two Bulgarian contractors were murdered in Iraq, the Bulgarian Government recommitted its support and later increased its troop level. The surest way to establish peace is to stand up to the terrorists and not turn and run, which encourages more terrorist barbarism.

For Bulgaria, this is not an insignificant commitment. This Eastern European country is one of the least developed to contribute troops to the Coalition, and doing so has greatly impacted the nation's economy. Yet despite its limited resources, Bulgarian troops have re-

built hospitals and schools, restored power and water, and provided security to numerous towns and villages—considerable accomplishments for a country that itself is a budding democracy.

Some have belittled the Coalition as simply a reporting of numbers. This disparages the great sacrifices made in Iraq by smaller nations such as Bulgaria. To the contrary, it is the contribution of these smaller nations that signals to the Iraqi people that even those nations less fortunate than the world's superpowers care deeply about the future of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I for one, am deeply grateful to our Bulgarian friends, and I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing and commending this United States ally for its sacrifices and continuing commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know firsthand of this service having visited with Bulgarian troops in Afghanistan and my oldest son, U.S. Army Captain Alan Wilson, was eager to meet his Bulgarian colleagues during his year-long tour last fall in Iraq.

I thank you Bulgaria for your friendship to the United States, and together, we will never forget the attacks of September 11th, 2001.

## "THE YOUNG AND THE JOBLESS"

**HON. BARNEY FRANK**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 19, 2005*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, one of the most troubling aspects of our current economic situation is the eroding position of a very large number of working people. While I was pleasantly surprised by the relatively high number of jobs created in April, the fact is that job creation during this recovery period has significantly lagged both historical experience in recovery, and the projections of the Bush Administration. Even more distressing is that those who have gotten jobs are being paid at rates which are historically low in real terms. Distressingly, inequality in our society is increasing even as our wealth increases, and as Alan Greenspan noted a year ago, a disproportionately large share of the increased wealth has gone to corporate profits and very little to compensation paid in wages and salaries.

In a recent New York Times article, Bob Herbert does an excellent job of documenting this problem, quoting from the excellent report from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston. Andrew Sum, the Director of that center, is appropriately quoted in that article as noting that in the current economic phase, "younger workers have just been crushed." I admire the work that Andrew Sum is doing and I appreciate Bob Herbert's giving this the broader exposure to which it is entitled. In furtherance of this need to understand what is happening in our economy today, I ask that Mr. Herbert's article be printed here.

[From the New York Times]

THE YOUNG AND THE JOBLESS

(By Bob Herbert)

There were high fives at the White House last week when the latest monthly employment report showed that 274,000 jobs had been created in April, substantially more, than experts had predicted.

The employment bar has been set so low for the Bush administration that even a modest gain is cause for celebration. But we shouldn't be blinded by the flash of last Saturday's headlines. American workers, especially younger workers, remain stuck in a gloomy employment landscape.

For example, a recent report from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston tells us that the employment rate for the nation's teenagers in the first 11 months of 2004—just 36.3 percent was the lowest it has ever been since the federal government began tracking teenage employment in 1948.

Those 20 to 24 years old are also faring poorly. In 2000, 72.2 percent were employed during a typical month. By last year that percentage had dropped to 67.9 percent.

Even the recent modest surge in jobs has essentially bypassed young American workers. Gains among recently arrived immigrants seem to have accounted for the entire net increase in jobs from 2000 through 2004.

Over all, only workers 55 and up have done reasonably well over the past few years. "Younger workers," said Andrew Sum, the center's director, "have just been crushed."

Whatever the politicians and the business-booster types may be saying, the simple truth is that there are not nearly enough jobs available for the many millions of out-of-work or underworked men and women who need them. The wages of those who are employed are not even keeping up with inflation.

Workers have been so cowed by an environment in which they are so obviously dispensable that they have been afraid to ask for the raises they deserve, or for their share of the money derived from the remarkable increases in worker productivity over the past few years. And from one coast to the other, workers have swallowed draconian cuts in benefits with scarcely a whimper.

Some segments of the population have been all but completely frozen out. In Chicago, only one of every 10 black teenagers found employment in 2004. In Illinois, fewer than one in every three teenage high school dropouts are working.

Last month's increase of 274,000 jobs was barely enough to keep up with the increase in the nation's working-age population.

"The economy is growing and real output is up," said Mr. Sum, who is also a professor at Northeastern. "But the distribution of income, in terms of how much is going to workers—well, the answer is very little has gone to the typical worker."

The squeeze on the younger generation of workers is so tight that in many cases the young men and women of today are faring less well than their parents' generation did at a similar age. Professor Sum has been comparing the standard of living of contemporary families with that of comparable families three decades ago.

"Two-thirds of this generation are not living up to their parents' standard of living," he said.

College graduates today are doing better in real economic terms than college graduates in the 1970's. But everyone else is doing less well. "If you look at families headed by someone without a college degree," said Professor Sum, "their income last year in real terms was below that of a comparable family in 1973. For dropouts it's like 25 percent below where it was. And for high school grads, about 15 to 20 percent below."

It shouldn't be surprising that the standard of living of large segments of the population is sinking when employers have all the clout, including the powerful and unwavering support of the federal government. Workers can't even get a modest increase in the national minimum wage.